

Is a Joint Intelligence Committee

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Yes—

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By REP. PAUL G. ROGERS

TO THE CASUAL READER of a daily newspaper, the mention of the Central Intelligence Agency immediately brings to mind cloak-and-dagger espionage, shrouded in secrecy. The fact is that a casual reader probably has about as much knowledge of just what the CIA is doing and how it functions as do most United States senators and congressmen.

No other intelligence agency in the free world has the scope and non-accountability enjoyed by the CIA. Cuba



Rep. Paul G. Rogers (D-Fla.) is the sponsor of a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that would merge the jurisdictions over the Central Intelligence Agency now held by various House committees into one "watchdog" committee. Mr. Rogers is a member of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce and the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committees. His remarks here were prepared for the Washington World.

alone, much less South Vietnam, Cambodia, Zanzibar, Panama, etc., would seem to indicate that Congress needs to exercise more adequate supervision over the CIA.

WHAT IS CLEARLY NEEDED, and what numerous authorities have proposed, is a Joint Committee on the CIA, composed of members of both political parties in the Senate and House, which would supervise the intelligence operations of this "supersecret" body. This proposal is not a novel or new one, and may even be traced to the distinguished Hoover Commission which in its report on the "Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government" suggested just such a joint congressional committee be formed.

Not only is this proposal based on authoritative recommendations, but it has precedent right in the Congress for its immediate establishment. I refer, of course, to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, which has the same relationship to the Atomic Energy Commission and our atomic policies as the CIA committee would have to that agency and the national interest.

Proponents of a joint CIA committee are not advocates of daily congressional interference with that agency. This would indeed be absurd. But it is not absurd to ask that a responsible congressional body be in a position to evaluate and understand the foreign intelligence work that is being carried out on behalf of the people of the United States.

It is the feeling of those concerned that an institution like the CIA should be as much under the jurisdiction of congressional authority as is the State Department, De-

fense Department, Atomic Energy agency, FBI, or any other vital federal agency.

THE ROLE OF THE CIA is not in debate here. It functions as an arm of the President and naturally his needs and desires will be reflected by the responsibilities he assigns to it. What the Congress wants and needs is an accounting of these functions and at present it is not getting it.

There are those who would say that the job of this agency requires that it have complete freedom and guaranteed secrecy. What is more secret than the Atomic Energy Commission? Yet it is under congressional review by a joint committee.

By proposing a Joint Committee on the CIA, the sponsors do not seek to cast doubt on the loyalty or patriotism of our CIA employes. Nor do we attempt to imply that the subcommittees now dividing jurisdiction have been lax. Rather we feel that the time has come when the matters at hand are of such importance to national security and foreign policy that it has become necessary to have a more specific assignment of primary congressional responsibility.

At present a subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee of each branch of Congress has the responsibility of supervising CIA operations. However, these Armed Services Committees also handle the entire Defense Department with its \$50 billion budget. Since the time of its assignment to these subcommittees, the CIA has grown to enormous proportions (as attested by its new \$45 million headquarters office building on the Potomac). This growth is testimony to the fact that a committee must devote itself to supervising CIA operations on a full-time basis. We can no longer permit these vital matters to be handled on a subcommittee basis, any more than we would let the activities of the State Department or the Defense Department be handled entirely by a subcommittee on a part-time basis.

THE MAJOR FUNCTION of the CIA is procuring and evaluating intelligence information. Its very name indicates it is a central clearing house and gathering agency for intelligence information coming into our hands from all sources. The Armed Services Committee, on the other hand, is concerned with military operations. The CIA was created out of the old OSS which was a part of the military operations of World War II. The CIA today has outgrown this concept and now functions as a joint governmental agency, as much concerned with matters under the jurisdiction of the State Department as Defense. While all are certainly interrelated, we are still confronted with congressional interest resting with a subcommittee of limited jurisdiction. The CIA clearly has transcended the jurisdiction and primary concern of the Armed Services Committee.

The time has come for this Congress to own up to its responsibility to the American people. Indeed, the time has come for a joint "watchdog" committee on the CIA for the security and well-being of our nation.